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COMMISSION

ON

LUNATIC ASYLUMS

OF THE

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC



REPORT

OF

MESSRS. DUROCHER AND BOURGOUIN.



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TO THE HONORABLE A. R. ANGERS,

Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of Quebec,

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR,

While admitting that the report of the Commission on Lunatic Asylums, signed by the majority of the commissioners and submitted to you, contains opinions generally which are in accordance with ours on many subjects, and contains also a number of valuable documents and interesting information, we, the undersigned, members of the Royal Commission, appointed and constituted on the 17th September 1887, under an act passed in the 32nd year of Her Majesty's Reign, and intituled: "*An act respecting inquiries in public matters, to inquire into the difficulties which had arisen in connection with lunatic asylums and the putting into force of the statute respecting such asylums, on the real causes of such difficulties and the means to be taken to put an end to them*," have the honour to submit the following special report in consequence of our dissenting from the majority, on certain important points.

After having been sworn, the Commissioners spent the first days in examining the reports of the visiting physicians, covering the past 12 years, those of the inspectors of prisons and asylums, the correspondence between

the proprietors of the asylums and the Government, and, finally, the reports of the medical boards appointed under the Asylums act of 1885.

The examination of these numerous documents necessitated considerable study and occupied several sittings of the Commission.

Provided with the information so obtained, we visited the asylums of the Province, commencing by Beauport, then St-Jean de Dieu, St-Ferdinand d'Halifax, Belmont and finishing with St-Benoit Joseph Asylum, at Longue-Pointe.

In order to facilitate the holding of so comprehensive an investigation, the Commission deemed it expedient and advisable to have a notice published in the leading newspapers of Quebec and Montreal, asking the public to make any complaints and suggestions to the Commission which they might deem proper.

Several persons whose names we did not learn, sent us several anonymous complaints, containing serious charges of immorality against the proprietors of Beauport asylum and against the principal officers of that institution.

As the Commission was anxious to ascertain the truth of these charges, they took every possible means to discover it and gave every opportunity of bringing forward evidence to throw light upon the charges. The persons themselves who were mentioned in these anonymous communications, were summoned to appear as witnesses before the Commission. The proprietors, officers, keepers and all those specified in the notices from outsiders, the Government physicians and officers, the Catholic and Protestant Chaplains, were all called upon to give their evidence freely and express their opinion respecting the asylums, the manner in which they were kept, the conduct of the officers, keepers, proprietors, house physicians and finally respecting any matter which might guide the Commission in their investigations and be of interest to the public, as to the manner in which the insane and idiots are treated in the various asylums of the Province.

During the interval between visits to the asylums and the examination of witnesses, the Commission continued to examine and study the documents.

Finally, on the 28th February last, Doctors Duchesneau, Durocher and Lavoie, and Mr. N. H. Bourgoin, accompanied by a stenographer, Mr. Boisvert, went to visit several asylums in the United States, namely :

the Elizabeth Asylum, at Washington; the Mount Hope Asylum, at Baltimore; two at Philadelphia; three at New-York and those of Providence, Worcester, Utica and Buffalo. The Commissioners returned by the Province of Ontario and, on their way, visited the asylums of London, Toronto and Kingston.

During these visits, we obtained valuable information as to the keeping and management of these asylums and brought back a quantity of books and reports which have been of great use to us, have placed us in a position to appreciate the value of our asylums and have served to show us the improvements which might be made in them.

It is an agreeable duty for us to express our thanks to all the officers of these various asylums, without exception, for the kind and polite manner with which they always received us and the willingness with which they gave the information and reports we asked of them. This cordial reception was extended to us everywhere, in the United States as in the sister Province.

We will now, at once, enter fully into the question to be studied, following the programme traced out for us.

I. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH HAVE ARISEN BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PROPRIETORS OF THE ASYLUMS.

Answer. The chief cause of the present difficulties is the act of 1885 (48 Vict., chap. 34).

As soon as the bill was laid before the Legislature, the proprietors of the asylums at once protested, declaring to the government of the day that their contracts would be infringed upon; that new obligations were sought to be imposed on them, etc. They have since continued to protest and have adhered to their contracts.

We will state further on, in the following replies, whether these protests were founded or not.

Various circumstances brought about the passing of that act. It will suffice to mention a few of the more important ones. We will not go back further than 1883, as, that year, the Government renewed the Beauport contract for 10 years and consequently acknowledged that there were no difficulties such as we are instructed to inquire into.

Accusations which more resembled insinuations than precise or definite charges have, for some years, been circulated amongst the public against the asylums. For instance, it has been said that the proprietors of the asylums sought to make money, to speculate on the unfortunate, by keeping in their establishments persons who were cured or by admitting sane people. The charge so brought was exceedingly malicious towards the proprietors of the asylums.

We may add that it was unfounded, for the proprietors had no right to discharge patients. The Government had an officer, entirely independent of the proprietors, who alone could admit or discharge the patients.

That officer had all the responsibility of admissions and discharges, and it was unfair for certain newspapers to seek by insinuations to place that responsibility on other shoulders. If there had been any abuse in this respect, the public should have blamed the Government officials and no one else. Has there really been any abuse? We have been unable to find any. The Rose Lynam matter made a great noise and after a law-suit to which the papers gave great importance and publicity, that person was handed over by the court to the care of a specially selected guardian. But the report of the expert appointed by the court, Dr Vallee, did not declare her to be sane. He merely expressed the opinion that she could be cared for outside of an asylum and the judgment was based on that report. It is a publicly known fact that after having liberated, Rose Lynam escaped from the control of her guardian and committed acts of excentricity which in the end again rendered judicial intervention necessary.

Consequently, it is hard to say whether there was any abuse in that case. The opinions of the doctors who examined Rose Lynam, were greatly divided. The physician of the proprietors of St Jean de Dieu was of opinion that she was not insane, the Government physician, Dr Howard, was of a contrary opinion.

This diversity of opinion continued before the court amongst the other physicians who were examined.

In any case, every one will admit that the Lynam matter could not serve as a foundation for the charges against the St Jean de Dieu asylum, as was afterwards attempted.

Some time afterwards, in 1884, an English specialist, Dr Tuke, visited the asylums of this Province and made a report which created a sensa-

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tion. The English newspapers of Quebec and Montreal, especially, seemed to endorse all that this physician had said and took pleasure in repeating his insinuations.

Dr Tuke came from a country where the system of farming out does not exist, and from the only country in the world where the non-restraint system is generally adopted. Considering that the latest improvement of contemporary science on the treatment of the insane, lies in the English system, he could not find to his taste asylums on a different system.

Dr Tuke's report is well-known; it was the subject of a remarkable criticism from the pen of Dr J. C. Taché, of Ottawa.

Until Dr Tuke's visit, the physicians charged by the government with the supervision of the asylums do not appear to have asked for any change or made any complaint; but then, as if he were afraid of being held responsible, Dr Howard commenced to make suggestions in connection with St Jean de Dieu, and to ask for more powers as regards restraint and in other respects. It was this same Dr Howard, however, who had instituted, applied and approved restraint. At the same time the English papers in Montreal published articles against the farming out system. It is strange that St-Jean de Dieu should have been the object of all these insinuations and accusations. And yet it must be admitted that this is the best kept of all our asylums. How is it, that Beauport, which was at that time, the largest establishment, should have been overlooked and that nearly all the remarks should have been made about St-Jean de Dieu.

For many years, the Protestants of Montreal or a certain number of them, have been desirous of having an asylum for the insane of their religion, and they are right. Until lately their efforts have been unsuccessful notwithstanding the repeated appeal of the newspapers of their belief.

Did any one consider that it was necessary to cry out against St-Jean de Dieu, in order to get more subscriptions? We regret to state that these appeals to Protestant capitalists were sometimes accompanied by unfounded accusations, as, for instance, when it was said that the Protestant insane were not properly treated, and by criticisms founded on theories alone, such as absolute condemnation of the farming out system and even by insinuations, like those above mentioned, that the proprietors of asylums had a right to detain patients who were cured, which was not the case.

The establishment of an asylum for the Protestant insane is a desirable object, which may be effected by praiseworthy means and by truthful appeals. We are happy to see that the idea is about to be realized. It will prevent many recriminations and remove many difficulties. We will only refer casually to some other charges, such as the following: that the Sisters of St-Jean de Dieu detained patients even after they were discharged; that they had their board paid to them; that they detained children of female patients born after the admission of such patients and charged their board to the Government; that they gave spoiled pork to patients, etc., etc., because there never was the slightest foundation for these charges.

Dr Perreault has stated, in his evidence, that sometimes his prescriptions could not be carried out. Although we asked him to do so, he could not give the circumstances, time, name of the persons, etc., in connection with these statements.

We questioned the Sisters; we examined the prescription book; we specially questioned the sister in charge of the dispensary and after this investigation we cannot say that Dr Perreault's statement is proved.

The public agitation which we have mentioned probably led the Government of 1885 to get the Act, 48 Vict., chap. 34, passed, which is the chief cause of the difficulty which still exists between the Government and the proprietors of the asylums.

2. DOES THE ACT OF 1885 EXCEED THE RIGHTS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT ACQUIRED IN THE ASYLUMS, BY CONTRACT?

Answer.—Yes.

The Commission obtained, on this point, the opinion of two eminent advocates of Quebec, Messrs Jacques Malouin and C. B. Langlois. The proprietors of the asylums had themselves consulted several eminent legal authorities.

It is evident that the act of 1885 has exceeded the rights which the Government had acquired under the contracts.

It is evident that, in an agreement, a party cannot be called upon to perform more than he has agreed to or to accept changes which he has not contemplated and which have not been provided for.

The proprietors of asylums objected to the act of 1885 chiefly on two

important points. They say that the law takes away the treatment from them ; that the treatment in an insane asylum comprises everything or nearly everything relating to the administration. There cannot be a separate control over the treatment and another over the administration, which would mean having two heads for one body. These two things cannot be done independently one from the other. The selection of physicians which the law leaves to the Government, is another source of complaint, for under the contract, this selection rests with the proprietors. The legal opinions are in favour of the latter and say that the act is wrong.

The act 48 Vict., chap. 34, by section 55, gives a recourse to the asylum proprietors, in the event of the carrying out of the law giving them occasion to make a claim. This clause could not redeem the act in the eyes of the proprietors because, although the article does apply in the case of changes in the buildings where a special account may be kept, it is quite impossible to apply it to the thousands of details of the treatment, viz : the food, clothing, exercise, labour, *régime*, etc., etc. In order to avoid extravagant expense, all this has to be managed on a well organized system with all the economy consistent with the required efficiency. But no system can work well if a stranger has the power from time to time and of his own accord, to suspend or hinder its working.

The Government is not without guarantees. It may and should exercise all the necessary supervision to ensure the proper observance of the contract, to see that the patients are properly treated and cared for in every respect. It may, if necessary, perfect and increase this supervision to make it as detailed as possible.

This right, if properly exercised, should be quite sufficient.

3. WHAT IS THE OPINION OF THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES RESPECTING THIS LAW ?

Answer. This opinion was publicly expressed at the electoral discussion of the law in the Autumn of 1886. It does not appear to have altered since. We will say no more on this point, merely referring to the letters of the bishops who were good enough to reply to our questions. Their opinion may be resumed as follows : "This law should not be applied."

4. HAS THIS LAW BEEN PUT IN OPERATION?

Answer. No. The first six sections which contained the important changes to the previous laws have not been applied. They could not be because they are the sections which the legal advisers condemn as violating the contracts. The medical boards of Saint-Jean-de-Dieu and Beauport have been uselessly organized, in this sense that the six physicians who compose them, have merely performed the duties of the two former visiting physicians. Like the latter, they have only had to see that the contracts are observed and to sanction the admissions and discharges. The asylum proprietors have adhered to their contracts in accordance with their protests before and after the act. *The Province has therefore since 1885 had to pay, unnecessarily or almost unnecessarily, six officials instead of two.*

We think that one competent physician in each asylum is sufficient to see that the stipulations are complied with and to sanction the admissions and discharges. This officer might have an assistant if necessary.

5. HOW ARE THESE ASYLUMS KEPT?

A. Are they on an efficient footing? B. Are they kept in as satisfactory manner as can be expected in view of the price paid to the proprietors for each patient?

Answer. We have three lunatic asylums under contract, viz : Beauport, Saint-Ferdinand-d'Halifax and Saint-Jean-de-Dieu.

The following is the result of our observations :

BEAUPORT

The members of the Commission visited the Beauport asylum in October last (1887).

This asylum consists of two main buildings; the principal one contains the lodgings and offices of the managing officials and the female patients; the other is for the male patients.

These buildings, which have been built and enlarged at various periods, according to the requirements or number of patients, are far from having all the accommodations and conveniences of modern asylums built on a plan adapted to the object for which they are intended. The first thing that strikes one is the over-crowding and the too limited space for the number of patients the asylum contains.

The number of keepers seemed to us to be insufficient and they are not paid a reasonable remuneration. Moreover, it appears from the evidence adduced, that these keepers are not constantly at their posts, being called upon by the proprietors to do work foreign to their duties as keepers. The result of this is that the supervision is insufficient both by day and by night, and many accidents happen. This defective supervision is also the cause of several things occurring which are contrary to morality,

Ventilation is imperfect and there is always a bad smell in many of the wards. The closets and baths are in bad order; in a word, the state of cleanliness is not what it should be, especially in the men's department. Some wards are defective and the cells should be improved.

The food is insufficient and not varied enough; it is also defective in quality. The meals are eaten too hurriedly and here again the supervision is insufficient. The result is that some patients have not sufficient time to take their meals. It would be therefore desirable, in their interest, to have more dining-rooms. These are not suitable, especially the men's, which is in the basement, badly lighted and not at all finished.

The clothing is insufficient, especially in Winter, and it is not cleanly enough. Restraint is sometimes abused of. It should be exclusively controlled by the physician.

The chapel is too small and is inadequate for the establishment. This is also the opinion of the chaplain himself. The medical service is inadequate and almost *nil*, because one physician has not time enough to do all the work which falls on him and which would keep three physicians occupied. The present incumbent, notwithstanding his willingness, cannot do all the work.

We are also of opinion that there is no unity of action in the exercise of authority in this asylum. While admitting that the proprietors have made some improvements necessary for the comfort and safety of the patients, we think that this asylum might be better kept, considering the price it receives from the Government for each patient. Moreover, all these desirable improvements should have been asked for by the various Governments which had the right to do so under the contracts.

We mentioned above that some things had occurred which were

contrary to morality. After a minute investigation we must say, in justice to the warden, the proprietors and the principal officers of the asylum, that they cannot be personally blamed in this respect.

SAINT FERDINAND-D'HALIFAX

After Beauport, we visited the asylum of Saint-Ferdinand-d'Halifax, in the county of Megantic, about twenty miles from any railway communication.

This asylum is intended only for female idiots and at the time of our visit, there were 84. Some of them should not be there because, properly speaking, they cannot be said to be really idiots. This asylum can contain from 50 to 60 patients. It is over-crowded and has no system of ventilation. The cells are narrow, badly lighted and are only four and a half feet by seven.

We are surprised that the Montreal Medical Board should have made such high-flown reports about this asylum, which is the least suitable in the Province. We noticed nothing reprehensible in the manner in which the patients are kept.

BELMONT.

We also visited the Belmont asylum, situated a few miles from Quebec.

It is a private asylum intended especially for inebriates. It occupies a splendid site, but the building is old. However, with some improvements it might be made to contain a great many patients, about a hundred. There are also some insane patients in it.

SAINT-BENOIT-JOSEPH.

After Belmont, we visited the Saint-Benoit-Joseph asylum, kept by the *Frères de la Charité* at Longue Pointe and situated a short distance from the Saint-Jean-de-Dieu asylum. Only private patients are admitted.

The buildings are new and splendid. The manner in which the asylum is kept and the discipline leave nothing to be desired.

It can accommodate about 150 patients.

 SAINT-JEAN-DE-DIEU.

We made a minute inspection of this asylum and spared no pains to ascertain how it is kept in every respect.

It is the best kept of all our asylums, although it has been the object of more accusations than any other.

It is well situated and surrounded by extensive farms. Although built of brick, it has an imposing appearance.

An avenue bordered by several rows of trees, leads up to the buildings which are nearly half a mile from the main road.

The asylum of Saint-Jean-de-Dieu is unexcelled as regards order and cleanliness.

We will say, further on, what remains to be done in other respects to make it equal to the best asylums in the United States.

This asylum commenced as a refuge for idiots in 1873. Two years afterwards, the Government obtained the right to send insane there for the same price as that paid for the idiots viz: \$100.00 per head per annum.

We found this asylum over-crowded like Beauport.

However, considering the amount paid, it is our duty to state that the Government cannot exact more than it receives. We may even say that, in many respects, the Sisters do more than they are obliged to do.

We noticed that great care is paid to ventilation which is generally good throughout the wards of St Jean de Dieu. The food is wholesome and abundant; the keepers are competent and paid a reasonable remuneration. They should wear a uniform which would increase their control over the patients (1).

The clothes supplied to the patients leave nothing to be desired in any respect. The walls are covered with pictures and look quite gay.

(1) Since our inspection the keepers have been provided with a neat uniform.

The furniture, and bed clothes are most comfortable both as regards quantity and quality. All the beds are provided with improved spring mattresses.

There is a library for the patients, while a band and orchestra amuse them during the long winter evenings. A special professor of music has charge of this department. There are also other games, such as, dominoes, draughts, cards, bagatelle, &c. The reverend Sisters are also in the habit of getting up musical and dramatic entertainments for the patients in a large hall set apart for the purpose.

In addition to ordinary inside and household work, there are sewing rooms and shoemaker's shop, a forge, a bakery, an abattoir, a joiner's shop, a laundry and a clothing room, in which a good many patients are at work. In summer time a greater number are employed on the farm.

The asylum is well lighted. The hot water apparatus for heating the building, works very well and gives full satisfaction. The dispensary is one of the finest and best supplied we have seen in America. The store-rooms are full of provisions and there is no lack of dainties.

The supplies of clothes and blankets are the most complete of any we have seen.

We must specially mention the chapel which surpasses in every respect all those we have seen in any institution of the kind.

Two physicians devote all their time to treating the patients. Dr Bourque, the head physician, performs his duties in the most competent manner.

The proportion of cures, considering that this asylum admits idiots as well as insane, is satisfactory; we would like, in view of the rapid increase in the number of patients, to see the proprietors secure the services of a third physician.

We are not quite in a position to recommend improvements in that asylum, inasmuch as the proprietors already do more than they are obliged to do in proportion to the small price paid to them. If, however, the Province considers that it can increase the amount allowed for the insane, we express the opinion that the price given to St Jean de Dieu should be raised, so as to enable the Sisters to make certain improvements which they have in view, amongst others to improve their cells, which they

have already commenced to do, so as to constantly keep up with the progress of science.

We must admit that they have already, without being asked, made constant changes and effected considerable improvements. It would be unreasonable to ask for more, considering the slender resources at their disposal.

By raising the price per head the Government would probably be able to give the St Jean Dieu patients the services of another physician and to have the number of keepers increased so as to allow of work being organized on a larger scale, as for extensive industries for instance.

In order to remove existing prejudices, the Government might, in a new contract, stipulate that the physicians should have the control of the pharmaceutical treatment and restraint and also of diet, in the infirmaries and should alone decide what patients can and should work; this, in fact, is now done. It might also probably, be possible either to get the proprietors of St Jean de Dieu to erect separate buildings for the violent patients and for the idiots, or to separate, in the asylum itself, the curable from the incurable. However, we must say that the opinion of specialists, all over the world, is greatly divided on that point. Some think that the separation of the curable from the incurable has a good effect, while others find that the mixing together of both classes, and even of the idiots with the insane, produces a greater number of cures.

6. SHOULD ANY CHANGES BE MADE WHICH, WHILE RESPECTING VESTED RIGHTS, WOULD MAKE THE PRESENT SYSTEM MORE EFFECTIVE AND GIVE FULLER GUARANTEES TO THE PUBLIC ?

Answer.—We have made a good many important suggestions in our preceding answers and we will now complete them with the following remarks.

Remarks on the admissions.

There are in the asylums a considerable number of persons who should not be there, but who might have been left with their families or placed in refuges for the aged. To what must this be attributed? Is it to ignorance or misinterpretation of the law, want of decision or of independence on the part of the medical boards?

Under the law as it stands, the medical board has absolute control over the admissions, even when the patients are sent by the magistrates.

We must therefore conclude that the Government officials have not applied the law as they should have done. They must consequently bear all the responsibility which it has been unjustly sought to throw upon the proprietors of the asylums.

We have also observed that there are patients at Government expense, whose relatives are able to pay their board. Such preference is unfair and should disappear. Steps should be taken to prevent such abuses in future and put a stop to those that already exist. The Government officials should be made to do their duty with respect to the admissions. If the law had been applied as it should have been, our asylums would not be overcrowded, the harmless patients would not be so numerous and would not take the place of those who are entitled to admission.

As regards admissions, there are two objects to be attained : 1. To secure the prompt placing in the asylum of patients who are suffering from the first attacks of the disease, as this has an important effect upon their cure ; 2. To admit only such idiots and demented persons as are dangerous, epileptic, a source of scandal or deformed monsters.

Our law as it now stands is quite sufficient in this respect. It has only to be applied justly and strictly, paying no heed to the recriminations of relatives, to solicitations, to political or any other extraneous influences whatsoever.

Remarks on discharges.

The Government, through the medical boards, has exclusive control over the discharges. The visiting physician also had such control. Consequently in this also, if there has been any abuse, the public officials are to be blamed and not the proprietors of the asylums.

We are of opinion that a single physician for each asylum would be sufficient for supervision and in this respect, a saving can be effected. But this physician should retain the absolute right of deciding upon the discharges, either in consequence of cure, or of improvement or of other reasons. However, we think that it would be advisable that such physician should have the opinion of the physician under whose treatment the patient is and that such opinion should be entered in a book kept at the asylum. As the latter physician would know the patient better than any one else, his advice would be useful to the Government officer.

Organisation of the Medical Service.

In our opinion the following system should be adopted :

I. The resident physicians to be appointed by the proprietors and to be three in number for each of the asylums of Beauport and St. Jean de Dieu ;

II. The visiting physician to be appointed by the Government and have alone the right to admit and discharge the patients. He might appoint an assistant, if necessary, with the approval of the Government. The visiting physician should perform all the duties assigned to the medical board, with the exception of the treatment of the patients.

III. The inspectors of asylums to continue, with their present duties.

IV. We would further advise, as the crowning part of the system, and in order to secure its more efficient working and give fuller security to the public, that a supervising committee be appointed, such as they have in the United States, consisting of persons removed from political influences and charges. The magistrates of the districts of Quebec and Montreal, the recorders of the two cities, the bâtonnier-general of the Bar, the president of each Faculty of Medicine selected by the Faculty itself, and the chaplains of the asylums might be *ex officio* members.

The committee should have the right of inquiring into the manner in which the system works throughout all its details, receive complaints, and make investigations when necessary, settle all difficulties which might arise and, in the event of failure to do so, report to the Government. It might have a secretary selected from among the visiting physicians. Its members would receive no remuneration but would be allowed their travelling expenses. The committee would by by-law, determine the date and place of its meetings.

Remarks respecting Private Patients.

The relatives of these patients ask nothing from the Government and the latter does not assist them in any way. In the regulations respecting the admission and discharge of these patients, two things must be borne in mind :

1. To prevent sane people from being placed or kept in the asylums ;

2. To protect, as far as possible, the rights of the relatives and family. It is therefore necessary to take every reasonable precaution to prevent abuses which may occur, but not to go beyond that. It is necessary that a Government officer should have the right to visit the private asylums from time to time, to have access to the patients, to question and examine them and order their discharge if he deems it advisable. However, it is not at all necessary for that purpose that the names of private patients be sent to the public departments and kept in the Government records. In our opinion this is a useless exaction which may hurt the feelings of the relatives.

If frequently happens that a young girl, a young mother, a young man at the beginning of his career or a person of mature age occupying a high social position, may be compelled by sudden illness to be placed for some time under the care of the specialists in the asylums. Why should this fact be made public, be recorded in the public archives? There is nothing to justify such a proceeding. An afflicted father, a husband, wounded in his tenderest affections, does not wish his disgrace to be known and the future of those who are dear to him be irretrievably compromised, and he is right.

Let the public authority take measures to make sure that no sane persons are confined in the asylums but it is not necessary for that purpose to know either the names or the relatives of the patients.

The inspectors of asylums should be charged with this particular supervision over private patients; it is within the scope of their functions. The powers of the visiting physician should be confined to seeing to the execution of the contracts made for public patients.

Several private asylums may be founded, other than those with which the Government makes contracts—in fact there are some already—and in these asylums the Government would not have the special officer called the visiting physician.

The inspectors of asylums are therefore, from the very nature and extent of their duties, the proper persons to perform that office. It would also be a good thing to bind them under oath not to reveal the names of the patients or family secrets.

Remarks on the method of payment by municipalities.

The precautions taken by the present law, with respect to the

admission of public patients, seem to us to be quite sufficient. Nevertheless, we would observe that the law requires the signature of the mayor of the locality in which the patient is domiciled. The object of this is probably that the Government may have its recourse against the municipality for one-half of the patients' maintenance. This clause has given rise to various abuses.

In some cases, the mayors have refused, without reason, to sign the certificate required by law ; in other cases the patients have been sent inside the limits of an adjoining municipality or town and left at liberty in the road or public streets. Then, when arrested by the police and taken to the asylums, their domicile has remained unknown and the Government has had no recourse.

Would it not, then, be better, that the Government should have recourse against the county municipalities and the amount recoverable be equally distributed among all the parishes of the county ?

Unfortunately, it often happens that the poorest parishes are those which send the greatest number of patients to the asylums and this is the cause of the fraud practised to evade the law and not have to pay.

We therefore think that by transferring the responsibility from the parish to the county, these frauds would in a great measure, cease ; the parishes would not complain so much about the charges and the mayors would not refuse to sign. On the other hand, the Government would have greater facilities for recovering the amounts payable.

The Farming out System.

Although this subject is not, strictly speaking within the sphere of the duties of the Commission, it is however so intimately connected with it and is of such importance, that we have deem it our duty to say a word about it.

The farming out system has its detractors and it has its defenders. Its advantages and disadvantages have frequently been discussed and weighed, but like all other questions of the kind it will never be settled. Its solution depends upon the particular circumstances in which the various countries of the civilized world are placed.

We will therefore state facts and leave the deductions, as far as regards this Province, to be drawn for themselves.

The establishment and support of lunatic asylums have two fundamental objects: 1. To obtain the greatest number of cures possible, in curable cases; 2. With regard to incurable cases, to give to the unfortunates, whose seclusion is necessary in the interests of public safety, proper food and care, in view, as much as possible of their former position. All unnecessary expenses and improvements, which are not likely to attain these ends in a more effective manner, may be considered useless.

The majority of the patients of the Province come from the poorer classes. Those whose parents can afford to pay, provide for themselves.

Now, it does not appear that exaggerated luxury or princely comfort have any effect on the number of cures amongst these patients. The experiment has been tried in our day.

In some States of the American Union, where money is plentiful, real palaces have been built for the insane. They are very fine to look at, not for the patients, the majority of whom are not in a condition to do so, but for the visitors.

Nevertheless, these palaces do not, as regards cures, do one whit more than other asylums, which are less wealthy and more modest.

This is shown by the following figures:

ASYLUMS	Annual price per head	Average of cures by head
1887.—Buffalo Asylum.....	\$357.00	22.00
“ Elizabeth “ at Washington..	228.00	26 86
“ Mount Hope “ at Baltimore....		52.00
“ Utica; N.-Y. “	212.00	18.87
“ Worcester, Mass. Asylum	185.00	23.49
1886.—Blackwell's Island, N.-Y. Asylum		18.00
“ Harrisburg Asylum	205.79	19.00
“ Dixmont “	212.51	31.00
“ Danville “	180.44	9.00
“ Norristown “	198.89	15.00
“ Warren “	199.69	13.00
“ Friends “	598.00	22.00
“ Pennsylvania Hospital for Insane.	509.60	19.00
“ Toronto Asylum.....	124.90	28.00
“ London “	123 77	35.00
“ Kingston “	124.40	20.00
“ Hamilton “	131.31	27.00
“ Saint-Jean de Dieu Asylum.....	100.00	32.62
“ Beaufort Asylum.....	132.00	20.50

These figures are taken from the last reports which have been sent us.

Our asylums compare favorably in this table with the asylums in other countries. It should also be observed that, in Ontario and in the United States, the idiots are placed in special asylums, while at Beauport and St-Jean de Dieu there are a great many. As the idiots are incurable, the result is that the statistics of cures, in our asylums, are very favorable.

It is a singular thing that of the four Ontario asylums, that of London, which is the least in accordance with the newest ideas of great comfort, is precisely that which, last year, gave the best results as regards the number of cures.

The Kingston asylum is the most perfect. Work is admirably organized. Some trades are carried on on a large scale by the patients and yet, last year, the average of cures was very low, 20 per cent.

It should also be observed that Mount Hope Asylum, Baltimore, where the average of cures is the highest, is a private asylum, kept by a sisterhood of nuns. They take in only curable patients and the price charged is very high.

By comparing the amount of annual cost, we must, in order to thoroughly understand the matter, recollect that the Government has nothing to expend in the way of capital on our asylums.

We should therefore add to the amount of annual expenditure on the State asylums the amount of interest on the capital invested, which would bring up the figure to a larger amount and make the comparison still more favorable for our asylums.

The conclusion to be drawn from these statistics is that the system followed in our Province, is much more economical and yields satisfactory results on the score of cures.

The farming out system is followed in several European countries. It is especially liked in Catholic countries, which have the advantage of possessing religious communities and whose social condition, consequently, resembles that of the Province of Quebec. There are also some of the States of the American Union, which have no public asylums, such, for instance, as Vermont, Delaware and others, as well as some of the territories. The Brattleboro Asylum, which does not belong to the State, receives all the insane from Vermont. This asylum has been in exis-

tence for fifty years and has been both attacked and praised. Its statistics are as good as the other asylums of the United States.

What has happened here has been pretty much what has happened in Vermont. In 1872, a joint committee of both Houses of that State was appointed to study the question and report. Its opinion was unfavorable. The discussion continued and in 1876 the Houses appointed another joint committee to consider the same question. This committee made an elaborate report which we cannot quote in full, but we give the conclusion :

" At this point, we may be pardoned for venturing an opinion upon the question of the propriety of establishing a State asylum. If one were erected, its capacity should undoubtedly be equal to the accommodation of three hundred patients. According to the best authorities, the expense for buildings, apparatus and appliances, at the lowest estimate, would be, at the rate of one thousand dollars for each patient to be accommodated, making the cost, if authority and experience of other States are at all reliable, three hundred thousand dollars.

" The cost of the asylums in Massachusetts, with one or two exceptions, have been largely in excess of the above estimate.

" In view of those facts, we do not feel self-sacrificing enough to take upon ourselves the burden of attempting to secure the necessary appropriation for that purpose."—*Annual of the Vermont Asylum for the Insane*, page 201.

The question was finally settled in favour of the farming out system. The legislature merely increased the price paid for the patients, first to \$3.50 and then to \$3.75 a week, to enable the proprietors of Brattleboro to keep their institution on the same footing as other asylums.

In the Province of Quebec, at St-Jean de Dieu for instance, the price paid is not proportionate to what is done for the patients. In other countries, an asylum kept on that footing costs about double the amount, considering of course the amount of capital invested. It is therefore not reasonable to recriminate when the price is considered. The capital invested at St-Jean de Dieu is about one million dollars. If we deduct the interest at 4 per cent on this capital, from the amount paid yearly to the Sisters, there remains but \$60.00 for each patient.

The Sisters have even paid six and seven per cent. on their debt, which would still more reduce the amount paid for each patient. With-

out the amount they receive from private patients, they could not have done what they have for the public patients.

We say without fear of contradiction, that there is not a single asylum among those we have visited, which can be kept on the same footing for the same amount. If we want to exact more from the nuns, it is but just to commence by giving them more.

If, however, the Province of Québec should adopt the system of State Asylums, it would have to invest a capital of two millions of dollars and consequently to increase the already heavy amount voted for the insane by an additional expense of about eighty thousand dollars per annum.

Moreover, the expense per head would probably be greater than it now is, for experience has proved that a Government can never manage as economically as private individuals. We may, therefore, say without exaggeration, that the increase in expenditure would be about one hundred and fifty and perhaps two hundred thousand dollars per annum, without any appreciable benefit for the insane.

We have had a striking example of this in the asylum of St-John Dorchester, a State Asylum kept by the late Dr Howard. Each patient cost \$232.00, to say nothing of the repairs to the buildings and the interest on capital invested.

It is easy to understand why the Province put an end to this system. It was an excellent reason for justifying the Government of the day for having applied to a religious community.

Since we have the advantage of having large religious communities in our midst, we need not be afraid of having recourse to them for the relief of the unfortunate insane.

Now that our Protestant friends are about to have an asylum of their own, all difficulties will be smoothed over and greater liberty will be left in this respect to the Catholic majority.

The great argument used against the farming out system is that the proprietors are interested in doing the least they can in return for the amount they get. Theoretically this is true, but practically the argument remains without force when the proprietors are a charitable community, a community of women whose members come from the best of our Canadian families and have consecrated their lives, out of love of God and

of their neighbour, to relieving the misery of their fellow-creatures. Have they not proved it and is it necessary to look around upon the wonders which surround us? We see the Sisterhood of Providence, with the assistance of a very small grant, giving to about three hundred female deaf-mutes the most complete and the highest education which these unfortunates can acquire. We see the Brothers of St. Viateur doing the same for the male deaf-mutes and the Grey Nuns for the blind. In other countries these institutions would be supported by the State at considerable expense.

Who takes care of the foundlings, the orphans, the aged and the infirm? What remarkable deeds of charity are performed by the asylums of the Sisters of Providence, of the Grey Nuns, of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and of so many others, which are scattered about everywhere? What grants do they receive and have their zeal and self-sacrifice slackened in any way for all that?

Without seeking for examples outside the subject with which we are now dealing, is not Saint-Jean-de-Dieu a convincing proof that the Sisters are doing, not the least, but the utmost, that they can for the price paid? Does the Government not get even more than it has a right to exact in proportion to the remuneration granted?

We are bound, in all fairness, to state here that the Sisters of Saint-Jean-de-Dieu keep twenty-five insane, on an average, gratuitously and out of pure charity; that, moreover, they give private rooms and better accommodation than usual to about twenty-five public patients, without receiving anything extra for it. The latter are persons who have belonged to the liberal professions or have occupied a superior social position. Reduced to poverty by the vicissitudes of fortune, a prey to mental disease, they would suffer, in their lucid moments, if they found themselves mixed up with the others. The Sisters have not waited until requests were made to show their compassion and to alleviate as much as possible the misfortune of these poor people. One can readily understand that such delicate attention and care and a thousand other similar things have sometimes had a great effect upon the restoration of intellectual faculties.

It must not be thought that the State asylums, although the same theoretical argument may not be applied to them, are unassailable for all that, and that they have not given rise to commissions of inquiry.

We have already observed that they are expensive; we will further say that they may and do lend themselves to serious abuses as regards

morality. The same may be said, in this latter respect, of private asylums under the charge of laymen. However, with a religious community, this danger is almost entirely removed. In every ward, in every department, there are religious or nuns, whose presence renders materially impossible any offence against morality, either on the part of the keepers or employees, or on the part of the superior officers connected with the institution. Charges have been made against Beauport in this respect. No one has ever dreamt of making any against Saint-Jean-de-Dieu or Saint-Ferdinand-d'Halifax.

Here is another very important consideration which we deem it our duty to submit frankly and plainly. If the asylums belonged to the Province, would we not see, as in other public departments, at each change of Government, the replacing of all the employees who are not permanent, such as keepers, nurses, &c.? Who, knowing our political customs, can give a negative answer to this question? Would even the higher officers be safe from political vicissitudes? There is nothing more opposed to the proper administration of institutions like asylums, than these periodical changes, this uncertainty as to the morrow. This is an axiom which does not need demonstration. We do not wish to say anything against appointments due to politics, but it must be admitted that, in this respect as in many others, the State is a worse manager than private individuals; its selections are not generally as happy as those made by the latter. Without going beyond the subject with which we are now dealing, have we not seen a lumber merchant attain, at one step, the high position of inspector of prisons and asylums?

What a private individual can do with two or three employees, the State cannot do except with three or four, or perhaps more.

There would therefore be an increase of expenditure as the result of frequent changes in the staff and of the incapacity of the new-comers. And yet, in our opinion, the service would not be more efficient; far from it.

There are so many other institutions like the schools for deaf mutes and the blind, the refuges for the age which are supported by public charity and receive only nominal aid from the Government. Should we not, while caring properly for the most infirm of our fellow-creatures, those who are deprived of their reason, avoid incurring too heavy an expenditure in order to allow the Government to grant suitable aid to the various institutions whose mission is to relieve other infirmities? Do we not find, for instance, in Montreal, that the number of schools is entirely inadequate to the requirements of the population and that a

great many children can find no room in them ? Must we ignore all these wants and think only of the insane which are the infirm by for the best t eated by the State.

It is probable that even, at Beauport and at St. Ferdinand d'Halifax three fourths of the patients are better treated and better fed than they were at home and have many more comforts than they had while with their families. As regards comfort, food and care, their condition is as good, if not better, than that of the majority of our population.

We, therefore, as the conclusion of this portion of our report, recommend that the Government take measures to transfer the control of Beauport Asylum to a religious community, securing the repayment by annual instalments, or otherwise, of the amount which may be paid.

Amongst other weighty reasons in support of this conclusion, there are the following ;

1. The Protestants have their asylum and there is no longer any fear of clashing with religions beliefs ;

2. Since we leave, with confidence, the education of our children, boys and girls, to religious communities, colleges and convents, we are equally right in confiding our sick to their care.

3. The members of our religious communites take the vow of charity and self-sacrifice, have no family to support, no position to aspire to, they have no other object to fullfill than to carry out the purposes of the institution viz : charity, teaching, the care of the sick, etc, etc. What difference between them and mercenary hands, howsoever devoted they may be ! For the religious, the work is the object of his life, while he who serves for pay performs the work as a means of acquiring a position, of providing for the future.

4. So long as our population shall retain its Catholic feelings, it is and shall be the duty of a Christian Government not to offend its beliefs and inclinations, all the more so that the devotedness of our religious bodies secures considerable economy and a greater safeguard as regards morality.

5. Let us not imitate those European countries, which seek to secularize every thing, education and charity ; which seek to replace the religious in asylums by hirelings, banish the Brothers and Sisters from the schools, as well as every emblem of the faith of our fathers ; which

seek, in fine, to replace Charity by Philanthropy. The unfortunate and the poor require, not only bread, but also consolation to prevent their rebelling against their position and to prevent their letting hatred enter their hearts and corrupt their good sentiments. By this means great social commotions are avoided.

6. The Government has the right, under the contract entered into with the proprietors of Beauport to purchase that asylum for a sum to be determined by experts. It would thereby do away with certain clauses which have never received the approval of the Legislature or even of the Executive Conseil, amongst others the unjust clause which forbids the transfer of patients from one asylum to another and that which establishes the minimum number of patients at 850 instead of 650.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

I The cause of existing difficulties lies in the act of 1885, which was brought about as the result of certain prejudices among the public.

II The act of 1885 exceeds the rights which the Government has acquired in these asylums. Its important provisions have not been carried out.

III The asylum of St Jean-de-Dieu is kept on a better footing than could be expected in view of the price per head paid to the proprietors (\$100 00).

Although the Beauport asylum has, strictly speaking, been kept according to the letter of the contracts, it is nevertheless inferior to St. Jean-de-Dieu in many respects.

Considering the price paid, (\$132 00), we cannot say that the proprietors of Beauport could not have improved their asylum to a more considerable extent. But the various Governments have never availed themselves of a clause in the contract which allowed them to insist upon such improvements.

The asylum of St. Ferdinand d'Halifax is small, overcrowded, badly ventilated and too far from the centres of population and means of rapid communication.

IV To resume, if the Province is in a position to increase the expenditure for the insane, we suggest :

1. To pay a higher rate to the Sisters of St. Jean-de-Dieu in order that that asylum may, as regards comfort and modern improvements, become and remain the equal of the best asylums in America and that the nuns may enlarge their establishment;

2. To place Beauport under the charge of a religious community, taking the necessary steps to secure the repayment to the Government of the moneys expended for that purpose;

3. To transfer the asylum for idiots at St. Ferdinand d'Halifax to some place possessing easy means of communication such, for instance, as Somerset, where the same Sisters already have a large establishment;

4. We recommend that the six officers of the medical boards be replaced by two visiting physicians or superintendents, since the law which renders their appointment necessary, cannot be put into execution.

We think that the organization of a committee of supervision, composed as we have above suggested, would have the effect of preventing many difficulties from arising and of securing the more efficient working of the whole system.

Finally, we recommend that the act of 1885, which has given rise to all these difficulties, be at once repealed and that the old one, which gave more satisfaction, be re-enacted, until the question has been properly studied and the amendments made which may be deemed necessary to improve and perfect the law on lunatic asylums.

The whole respectfully submitted,

LOUIS B. DUROCHER M. D.
Commissioner

N. H. BOURGOIN.
Commissioner.

Quebec, 3rd July, 1888.

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